

FISHING SEASON OPENS BELOW THREE MISSISSIPPI RIVER NAVIGATION DAMS MARCH 16

DES MOINES – The fishing season opens in the tailwaters below three navigation dams on the Mississippi River on March 16.

The tailwaters below Dam 11 at Dubuque downstream to the railroad bridge near river mile 579.9; from Dam 12 at Bellevue downstream to the mouth of Mill Creek, near river mile 556.0; and from Dam 13 at Clinton downstream to the downstream end of Stamp Island near river mile 521.5 will open to all fishing on March 16.

Those tailwaters are closed to all fishing each year from Dec. 1 to March 15.

Iowa Fishing Report

www.iowadnr.gov

March 12, 2009

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources issues a weekly fishing report on Thursdays in an effort to provide the latest information heading into the weekend. The weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys, and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Yellow perch fishing continues to be good closer to shore in 8 to 15 feet of water around Buffalo Run, the pump house, and Hale Slough using jigging lures tipped with minnow heads or perch eyes and using a slip bobber rig baited with a minnow.

West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Bluegill fishing is fair in Little Miller's Bay and Pocahontas Point with small ice jigs tipped with wigglers or wax worms.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass are still biting on the west end of the lake near the Farmer's Beach access and west of McIntosh State Park in the new dredge area. A few walleye and white bass are also being caught while fishing for yellows. Jigging spoons and minnows below a bobber are the best techniques. Ice depth remains 16 to 18 inches, but warm days are deteriorating the access points. Use caution with the changing ice conditions this time of year.

Silver Lake (Worth): A few yellow perch are being caught fishing the north side of the lake by the county park and near the boat ramp on the southwest side. Try using a jig tipped with a minnow for best results.

Beeds Lake (Franklin): Bluegill and crappie fishing is fair, try using a small jig tipped with a wax worm.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Ice fishing is not recommended.

Brushy Creek Lake (Webster): The lake is about one-third open water and ice fishing is not recommended.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Water levels are nearly steady on the upper Mississippi River after last weekend's heavy rains followed by cooler temperatures and more stable conditions. Expect water levels to drop slowly. Water levels on Wednesday were 9.5 feet at Dubuque, 8.5 feet at Bellevue, and 12.6 feet at Camanche. Some ice fishing remains in select backwater locations, but beware of poor ice conditions next to land. In addition, take precaution around any flowing sloughs or current areas. Please review ice safety information and have a plan for dealing with unsafe conditions—including, but not limited to never fishing alone, having a rope or ladder, and ice spikes handy. No ice is without some risk; minimize your risk. Water conditions should improve by Monday when the tailwaters open for fishing below navigation dams 11, 12 and 13.

Open water tailwater conditions are available for anglers fishing at Lynxville and Guttenberg. Heavy angling pressure occurred during the unseasonably warm weather period as people tried to shed cabin fever. Fishing has been up and down in these reaches. Anglers reported catching small saugers along with an occasional large walleye using a minnow and twister tail combination tipped with a fathead minnow. Some anglers also used jigs with a ring worm rig as well.

Area lakes in the following counties have unsafe ice conditions and fishing is not recommended despite the recent cooler temperatures: Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Delaware and Tama.

Cedar (Black Hawk and Bremer) and **Shell Rock rivers** (Black Hawk and Butler): Open water conditions exist and anglers are fishing for walleye by boat and shore using jigs with a twister tail fished with or without minnows. Action had been better in and around the Waterloo area prior to last weekend's rain. A few northern pike are also being caught as the pike spawning seasons draws near. River levels are currently falling and fishing should improve as area rivers and creeks recede. Do not boat on flooded rivers.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): River levels are currently falling from recent rainfall events. The USGS gauge river level at Manchester is expected to be at 6.4 feet by Saturday morning. Try fishing immediately below the Lake Delhi Dam or the next pool down from the boat ramp for walleyes and northern pike. Use extreme caution when wader fishing or fishing in or out of the boat because of the increased flows.

Upper Iowa River (Winneshek): Reports of anglers catching walleye are beginning to come in. The Upper Iowa is up a bit and has fairly decent water clarity.

Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan): River levels are currently falling from recent rainfall events. The USGS gauge river level at Independence is expected to be at 6.6 feet or less by Saturday morning. Anglers should concentrate on vertical fishing near the current breaks or in the slack water areas out of the main current using 1/8 to 1/2 ounce jigs and twister tails tipped with or without a minnow for northern pike and walleye.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Angling continues to be slow but nice crappies and bluegills are biting. Fish are being caught using a jig tipped with a wax worm or wasp larvae. Evening is the best time to fish. There is water sitting on top of the ice, but ice remains and the edges are still frozen.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Fishing picked up again this week especially around the jetty. Anglers have been using dark purple or chartreuse colored jigs tipped with a wax worm. Nice size crappies and bluegills above 7 inches were biting. Try dangling lures about 3 to 6 feet under the ice. The best time to fish continues to be around mid day. The ice is sloppy, but the lower temperatures this week are helping.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Angling is slow. Runoff in the stream is making the water cloudy so use light colored jigs. Try fishing a different spot if a fish doesn't nibble right away. Also try suspending lures in 2 to 5 feet of water this time of year. There is open water along the edges, so take care if you venture on the ice.

Northeast Iowa trout stream conditions varied last week due to rain; however, most streams are now in excellent condition. Brown trout seem to be really aggressive when the water first gets cloudy. Trout calendars are now available on the web. Log onto www.iowadnr.gov and click on fishing and then choose trout stocking. Stocking will begin the week of April 1.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 20: In **Pool 16**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 15 is 12.48 feet and falling. Fishing has been slow due to high water. In **Pool 17**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 16 is 13.18 feet. Water levels are forecasted to crest today and begin falling over the weekend. Fishing has been slow due to high water.

In **Pool 18**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 17 is 16.04 feet and forecasted to crest today. River level is about a foot above flood stage. The Toolesboro landing is underwater. **Pool 19**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 18 is 12.08 feet. River levels are 2 feet above flood stage. Fishing has been slow due to high water. **Pool 20**, tailwater stage at Lock and Dam 19 is 16.64 feet. Flood stage is at 16 feet. Fishing has been slow due to high water.

Lake Darling (Washington): The lake is completely drained.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): The lake is mostly ice free except on cold mornings when a thin layer of ice forms.

Lake Geode (Henry): Lake was ice free as of last Friday. They hope to have the docks in as soon as the weather allows.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): The lake is ice free and is now back to normal water level. No fishing report at this time.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): The reservoir is ice free and the water level is expected to crest Saturday at 695.5 feet. Normal pool is 683 feet. No fishing report at this time.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): The lake is ice free and the water is high. No fishing report at this time.

Kent Park Lake (Johnson): The lake is ice free. No fishing report at this time.

Hannen Lake (Benton): The lake is ice free. No fishing report at this time.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): The lake is ice free. No fishing report at this time.

Rodgers Lake (Benton): The lake is ice free but the lake has sustained a winter fish kill due to low oxygen levels. The severity has not been determined.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Ice conditions are not suitable for ice fishing. Most of the lake has open water.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): The lake is completely free of ice.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): The lake is completely free of ice.

Lake Wapello (Davis): The lake has been completely drained.

Lake Miami (Monroe): The lake is completely free of ice.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Southwest

Most central Iowa lakes are partially ice covered. Ice should be off most lakes by the end of the weekend.

Des Moines and Raccoon rivers (Polk, Dallas, Boone and Marion counties): A few walleyes are being caught below dams. After last weekend's rain the rivers have become swollen and the Des Moines River below Saylorville and Red Rock is currently the most fishable. North and Middle Raccoon River levels are dropping and should be fishable again by the weekend or early next week. Use bright colored jigs such as pink or chartreuse with either white or chartreuse twister tails. Some anglers are doing well tipping with a minnow.

Contact Ben Dodd at (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the above area lakes

Ice is almost completely gone. Channel catfish angling is occurring at several locations. Most anglers are fishing from shore while using shad baits.

Three Mile Lake (Union): The lake is mostly open and boat anglers are catching some walleye and channel catfish.

Twelve Mile Lake (Union): The lake is mostly open. Some walleye angling is occurring over rock areas. Channel catfish can be caught on shad bait.

Lake Icaria (Adams): The lake is almost completely open. Some walleye are being caught in the lake over rock structure. Several walleye are being caught from the spillway area.

Contact Gary Sobotka at (641) 464-3108 for information on the above area lakes.

There are no reports of ice fishing. Most lakes have open water and remaining ice is rotten. Ice fishing is not recommended.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Crappie fishing is fair in the canals for 8 to 9-inch fish. Anglers having the most success are using white jigs tipped with minnows. Walleyes are being caught on the west side of the lake using twister tails and minnows.

Contact Bryan Hayes at (712) 769-2587 for information on the above area lakes.

For more information on general fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

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